

Bear Creek Guys and Gals 4-H Club 2024 LaGrange Mini Fair Grand Marshals

The Bear Creek Guys and Gals 4-H Club was founded in 1951, west of LaGrange in the Bear Creek community. The Parsons, Sussex, and Kessler families were the original club leaders. The club held their meetings and activities at members' homes and at the Bear Creek Community Building. Along with their monthly meetings, the club held square dances, talent contests, shows, and picnics. As a precursor to today's Mini Fair, the club held a Community Fair near the Community Building. Competitors from several area 4-H clubs brought their projects to the fair to compete with the Bear Creek members. The club also held an annual chuck wagon supper in May, serving over 300 people. This event was their club fundraiser and talent show for the community. One of the highlights of the club in the late 50's and early 60's was joining the LaGrange Livestock 4-H Club and forming a square dancing on horseback drill team. They performed locally and at other area events and fairs. Later, the two clubs merged and continued as the Bear Creek Guys and Gals.

In the 70's, the club members made annual trips on horseback to attend Albin Day. They also held annual club tours, where they would visit each other's homes to view the members' projects that would be exhibited at the Goshen County Fair in Torrington. It was after one of these tours that became rather rowdy that the then community club leader Bill Yetter decided it would be a better idea for the members to bring their projects to LaGrange. This began the present-day LaGrange Mini Fair, which for many years was held the Saturday before the County Fair. The Mini Fair provided the opportunity for many LaGrange area residents to be able to see the variety of projects the members would be exhibiting at the County Fair. Soon, after the Mini Fair began, Bill and Carolyn Ward started the Gymkhana in conjunction with the other activities of the day.

The present day 4-H club has 40+ members and six leaders. Every year the club leaders and members are active in the planning and implementation of many activities for the LaGrange Mini Fair. In previous years, the club has made and served the supper and hosted a cornhole tournament. This year, they are manning the concession stand (Snack Shack,) overseeing the kids' games, and Stick Horse station. Over the last several years, the club has hosted appreciation dinners, helped with community fundraising, passed out May Day baskets, and donated to several organizations and charities, and they work at the County 4-H Pancake Supper. Members have given awards to other county 4-H clubs, helped with community Easter egg hunts, planted flowers in LaGrange, and held baseball games and BBQs. The club annually decorates

a Christmas tree to raise money for Gracie's Promise and hands out 4-H information and candy at Trunk 'n Treat in Yoder. They visit Ellis Harvest Farm as an end of year project celebration and have a bowling party at Christmas.

The club is made up of members from many communities: Torrington, Yoder, Hawk Springs, Huntley, Scottsbluff, Gering, LaGrange, and the Bear Creek community. We are fortunate to have multi-generational club members: some for three generations. The club has been blessed to have the support of the community, parents, grandparents, and many family members over the years. We are extremely thankful to all of you!